

Report on Elementary Education

paraphrase

REPORT.

(Copy.)

EDUCATION OFFICE, LOWER CANADA,
Montreal, 15th April, 1846.

SIR,

I have the honor to transmit you herewith, my Report on Elementary Education in Lower Canada, and flatter myself that you will be pleased to present it to His Excellency, on the first favorable opportunity.

I could have wished to be able to acquit myself sooner of the task imposed on me yearly by the School Law; but the press of office business has neither permitted me to do so, nor to give my Report all the care which it required. I venture, however, to hope that it will have the effect of drawing the attention of the Legislature, to consider what measures should be taken to render the working of this law more easy, more certain, and more efficacious.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

J. B. MEILLEUR.

The Honorable D. Daly,
Secretary of the Province,
&c. &c. &c.,

To His Excellency Lieutenant General The Right Honorable CHARLES MURRAY, Earl Cathcart, of Cathcart, in the County of Renfrew, K.C.B., Administrator of the Government of the Province of Canada, Commander of Her Majesty's Forces in British North America, &c., &c., &c.,

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I.

The Common School Act 8 Vict. cap. 41, rendering it obligatory on the Superintendent to submit annually to the Legislature a detailed Report on the present state of public instruction in Lower Canada, I have the honor to submit to Your Excellency, the following Report, to be laid before the three Branches of Parliament, conformably to the 6th Article of the 34th Section of the said Act.

It is with deep regret, that I have to inform Your Excellency, that the regular working of the present School Act has been in general impossible, chiefly from two causes, namely: the almost universal opposition made to the Act at the outset, and the defects of the Act itself.

The fact is, that the School Law has either not worked at all, or has in most cases worked very badly, and this, notwithstanding the constant and courageous efforts made everywhere by the friends of education, and principally by the members of the Clergy of every creed and origin, to further its operation.

In endeavouring to give an account of the principal causes of this evil, I feel that I have to fulfil a task still more painful than difficult; but I must not, through any misplaced weakness, hesitate to point them out to the competent authorities, so that they may be enabled to prescribe a remedy proportionate to the evil. No: I write at this moment under the deeply felt influence of a double duty; that which the Law imposes on me as a public functionary, and that, not less sacred, prescribed to me as a citizen; for the Divine laws, as well as the laws of nature which emanate therefrom, impose imperiously on us all, the duty of contributing to the means of properly instructing the youth of our country, so as to make useful and virtuous citizens; and the promptings of weakness shall never restrain my pen.

I regard it then as a two-fold duty, to point out to the Legislature the facts of which it has both the right and the desire to be cognizant, so as to place within its power the remedy of the evil, by a more facile and efficacious Legislation.

But facts of so melancholy a nature as those mentioned above, require to be considered with reference to their causes,—such causes at least as are most obvious. Now these would not be sufficiently made known by merely saying that they originate, for the most part, in the defects of the law itself; it is my duty also to state, that the causes which have retarded or altogether prevented the proper working of the present School Law, are in great part owing to the systematic opposition made to its execution, by certain persons whose previous conduct in affairs of a public and common interest, as well as their social position, afforded grounds for expecting from them an altogether different conduct, in respect to a measure of vital necessity for the country.

It is, however, my decided opinion that the people, now as ever, are sincerely desirous of giving instruction to their children. But they are poor, and not habituated as yet to the state of constraint and suffering to which they have been subject for several years: they believe themselves poorer than they really are, and incapable of conforming to what the School Law exacts of them for the attainment of this object. Neither have they sufficient instruction or experience in public affairs, to take upon themselves, each in his turn, and with the necessary confidence, the local administration of the new Laws which have just been given them, and intimately connected together. At present, therefore, it is impossible to judge with sufficient accuracy, of the principles of action of these two Laws, nor of the nature of the means proper for obtaining therefrom a good result: and some individuals, dispersed here and there throughout the country, and disposed to take advantage of these particular circumstances, inevitable at the outset of every new institution given for the advantage of a new people, have perverted in many localities, the ideas of the people in this respect, have turned them aside from the object of the Law made to ensure Education to their children, and have even induced them to oppose the adoption of the means for attaining it.

The School Law requires, from the Inhabitants of each Parish or Township, a small contribution only, either by voluntary subscription or by assessment on their real property, to be equal to the sum allowed yearly by the Legislature to aid them in procuring for their children the instruction which they require: but the word "TAX" has unfortunately slipped into the Law, and has taken the place of that of "contribution". Those who had reasons, sometimes inexplicable enough, for opposing, seized on the word "Tax" as the signal of a general and irreparable ruin, and suddenly, at their voice, the people were seen to rise in a body in certain Counties where the leaders of the opposition were more influential and more active, and, guided by the perfidious councils of these leaders, they allowed themselves for a moment to be dragged into the opposition.

The word "Tax" proclaimed by the heralds of the opposition, and the exaggerated enumeration of the evils fathered upon the tax, were thus successful for a certain time, and increased to such a degree the prejudices already existing, and so natural among all people against anything that resembles taxation, that they became almost invincible among the Inhabitants of several Parishes and Townships, who were not as yet sufficiently well informed to give their immediate and unanimous co-operation in the execution of the Law, of which besides they did not sufficiently comprehend the end, or the means of attaining it.

Thus, several have been known to condemn abruptly a purely philanthropic Law, made for the sole benefit of their own children, and to reject it with disdain, without taking the trouble to know the end proposed, to comprehend its principles, or to attempt at least the means of carrying it into effect. Parents have been seen, pitiable puppets of the leaders of the opposition, to concert in holes and corners miserable Petitions, and present them to the Local Authorities, praying them to stop the course of the Law, and to close forthwith the hand which, in its name, is ready to distribute to them in its favors. Citizens have been seen, fathers, unworthy of the name, some to dispute about the means through mere personal opposition, others to refuse every kind of contribution to respond to the benevolent intention of the Legislature. Some, deaf to the powerful voice of the most sacred of duties, have withdrawn from the Schools, from pure party spirit, their own children, however desirous of being instructed, even when the Local Authorities, to procure them the inestimable advantage of Education, exacted no contribution.

This opposition having in many places commenced during the very Session of Parliament in which the present School Law was passed, had already made so unfavorable an impression on the minds of the people at the time of its promulgation, that, at the particular time when the inhabitants were called by this Law to elect fit persons as School Commissioners, they, being accustomed already to consider it as unjust, tyrannical and oppressive, elected only men for the most part incapable, without instruction, and without even a wish to act. In other places the electors did even worse; they excluded from the Commission all educated men, whom in certain cases they exposed to many mortifications, and that in proportion to the zeal which they had shewn in the cause of public instruction, with the exception, however, of some, a very small number it is true, who, from motives known to themselves alone, had placed themselves at the head of the opposition.

This opposition was directed against all that is most respectable and worthy in society, and especially against the members of the Clergy, who had always rendered themselves conspicuous by their efforts, their sacrifices and their zeal for the progress of useful information

among their flocks. The electors could not, however, exclude them all from the Commission, because they are appointed generally as School Commissioners by the Law itself. In this latter case, the electors complained of their Law, and the circumstance of the members of the Clergy being also School Commissioners, without the participation of the inhabitants, is perhaps one cause which has contributed as much as any other, to render them obnoxious to the opposition, thus exposing them to the danger of losing that moral influence, which, joined to the religious influence they possess, is always more powerful and more effective for furthering the welfare of society than the purely official character given by the Civil Law.

I am aware of a locality where the inhabitants of heterogeneous origin and diversity of religious faith, having elected in the month of January, 1845, five members of the Clergy to be School Commissioners, refused, on the present School Law taking effect, to elect any one of them, and substituted men so utterly incapable that, eventually, they declared them to be so, and the parties themselves confirmed this declaration of their own absolute incapacity to fulfil with credit the duties of the honorable charge confided to them, by a solemn and official document to that effect; and I have reason to believe, that, in several other places, the election of School Commissioners which has taken place under the operation of the present Law, has been neither more judicious nor more effective.

In fact, not only have the elections which took place in the month of July last, confided the execution of the School Laws and of the Municipalities to persons having generally little capacity, and perhaps also little disposition to act, but these elections have also been conducted in a very irregular manner; so that their legality is often, to say the least, very doubtful.

Passive instruments in the hands of the opposition, the inhabitants of several localities were exposed to incessant commotions and to an agitation at the moment of the election of the School Commissioners, which scarcely allowed them to observe the requisite formalities to conduct it within the rules prescribed by Law. The party spirit which at that time prevailed, the disorder and confusion resulting therefrom, caused these elections to be made in all possible ways. In fact, it were useless to disguise that at the very outset of its operation, the present School Law met with general opposition from the inhabitants of every origin before they could have been able either to examine or well understand the importance of its end, the excellence of its fundamental principles, or the means of its operation, easy to all where good will is not wanting.

Such are the sad results which the opposition, directed by some individuals, has unhappily produced in many localities, under the specious names of public welfare and patriotism. Most strange abuse of words and things!

And here it must be observed that the preceding remarks, which I make solely in the acquittal of a duty having reference to public instruction, have nothing special, nothing personal in them; they relate to inhabitants of various parts of the country, of every origin, of every diversity of creed; and if there has been equally among them all something to regret, and even to blame, it is infinitely agreeable to me to be able to address a word of well merited praise in favor of some distinguished exceptions, who signalled themselves from the very commencement of the working of the Law.

For the rest, in giving an account to the Legislature of the manner in which the School Law has been received and worked, I have only to relate, in one single document, what the periodical journals have already said and repeated at different times, of the opposing efforts which have been simultaneously made on both sides, in different localities, either to endeavour to make this Law work usefully, or to have it rejected altogether by the unanimous voice of the people, and these journals have always done so in a way calculated to be most useful to the cause. It is, therefore, just to mention here, that the press, of whatever shade or opinion, has invariably shewed itself the friend of popular education and of those who, adopting the present School Law, have endeavoured to carry it into effect, were it only for experiment. The press always so powerful and so persuasive when it is unanimous, has, therefore, greatly contributed to effect the happy changes which have taken place, in many localities, from the month of July last, up to this day, and may justly claim great part of the honor.

The present School Act, however, contains scarcely any new principles, inasmuch as they were nearly all contained in the Education Act passed on the 18th September, 1841. The principle of contribution to form a sum equal to that which is offered annually by Government, is absolutely the same. But it may be said that under the operation of the Law of 1841, this principle was not put into practice. So that being revived in the present Law, it was every where considered as new by those who had to contribute.

The Law of 1841, like the present Law, was bound up with the Rural Municipalities, and necessitated for its regular working an active and unremitting co-operation on their part. But experience soon shewed that this connection was impracticable. These two Laws were not only new for the Country, but the inhabitants, also, had not asked for Municipalities, although excellent Institutions in themselves, and not having then taken any part in preparing the Ordinance which established them in Lower Canada, they opposed it chiefly on account of the source in which it had its origin.

From these circumstances strong prejudices arose, which were again roused at the sight of the present School Law, associated as that of 1841 was, with Local Municipalities; and these prejudices, having been revived and nourished among the people, the consequence was,

that at the outset the inhabitants were disposed to reject, without examination, both these Laws which grant them the power so often demanded by them of managing their own affairs. But this palpable inconsistency, into which they thus fell by their conduct, could not be wholly attributed to themselves, inasmuch as the opposition had for some time the art to persuade them that, after all, these two Laws were only made to extort their money from them, whether they would or no. This was indeed, attacking in the most sensible part, men who for many years have suffered more or less from the failure of their crops. How grave an accusation was this to bring against two Ministries and two successive Parliaments, who adopted almost unanimously the fundamental principles of these Laws.

It is known, too, that throughout all time the inhabitants of every part of the world have had more or less repugnance to submit themselves to new Laws, the principles of which they did not understand, especially when, to put them in operation, pecuniary contributions were exacted. The fact is that the people are not yet sufficiently well informed to be able to judge properly of the principles of the two new Laws which have just been given them. A people who are not, in general, sufficiently enlightened to appreciate the merit of the laws made for them, are more to be pitied than blamed when they are disposed to reject them.

About thirty years ago, an Educational Law was imposed on the people of the State of New York by the local Legislature. This law was very similar to that which has just been given to the inhabitants of Lower Canada, with this marked difference, that, in place of exacting from the contributors the half only, it exacts in effect all that is necessary for the instruction of their youth, the Government itself furnishing nothing for this purpose. Now, we know what great interest, what enthusiastic zeal exists in the United States for all that is connected with the instruction of youth. The people of the State of New York opposed, however, at the outset, this Educational Law, because its principles were not then sufficiently understood. But the Legislature not having repealed it, the people, instructed by the universal and uniform success of experiment, became more reasonable, submitted to its requirements, co-operated in its execution, and the happy results which are still extending and progressing, (for this very Law continues to be in force,) are truly admirable. Upwards of 12,000 Schools are under the able direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State.

The Common School Law passed in 1841, was not made only for Lower, but also for Upper Canada, where its working was attended with much difficulty during the two years it was in operation. So that for that part of the Province as well as for this, it was necessary in order to obtain any result, to have recourse to expedients and exceptional means, although not to the same degree. This fact made a new Law necessary for Upper Canada, and one was passed in the Session of 1842. Considerable modifications were made to the Law of 1841, which made its operation more certain. A project of Educational Law for Lower Canada was at the same time presented in the Session of 1843, where it passed two readings; its premises were admitted, but the measure was prevented from becoming Law from the sudden Prorogation of Parliament. The principles of this project form the basis of the present Law of Lower Canada.

The School Law of Upper Canada, framed in imitation of that of the State of New York, does not leave it optional to the contributors to make up by voluntary subscription, the sum requisite to equal that offered to them for the support of their Schools, on the same principle and in the same proportion as for the support of the Lower Canada Schools; for the £50,000 appropriated by the Act of 1841, of which the three first clauses are continued by that of 1845 for Lower Canada, have been divided between the two sections of the Province in proportion to their respective populations, according to the latest Census.

Thus, the inhabitants of Upper Canada are compelled to make up the sum required by Law, by an *ad valorem* tax on real property: the rule is absolute; there is no alternative: the sum must be made up by the time designated, because the interests of Education and the Law require it thus: and this is certainly what is most desirable for ensuring facility, uniformity, and the successful working of an Act of Elementary Education.

The School Commissioners, elected under the authority of the Upper Canada Act, are men in a subordinate and secondary position, being under the immediate direction of a Township Superintendent, a County Superintendent, and Chief Superintendent of Education (who is identical with the Provincial Secretary) which latter has also a Deputy residing among them. So that in that section of the Province the wishes of the people, their mode of perception, or the manner of action which they might prefer, are less consulted than the ends of the Law, and the means of attaining them with certainty. Thus the people opposed, or rather wished to oppose, this Law the first year, and reckoning on the mitigations which they hoped to be able to obtain in the last Session of Parliament, presented several Petitions to that effect; but the Parliament, not having thought proper to take them into consideration, the Law has remained intact, and, at the present day, works, I believe, in general well, though with some difficulty, principally arising from the too great number of Superintendents appointed to facilitate its operation.

It is therefore not to be wondered at, if the people of Lower Canada, yet in the infancy of popular institutions, have opposed the two Educational Laws imposed on them since 1841.

It is not to be wondered at if, moved by the desire of emancipating themselves from municipal rule, they shewed themselves disposed to reject these two Educational Laws, both grafted on Municipal Laws. It is not to be wondered at if the opposition leaders gained over the people, terrified at seeing these Laws associated, an influence which has led them away into proceedings which appearances might cause to be regarded as in opposition to Education itself. Neither is it to be wondered at, if, in view of these facts, I claim, on behalf of Public Instruction in Lower Canada, a legislative measure that shall be energetic, independent, and sufficiently powerful to put an end to all opposition, and to promote with certainty the welfare of our interesting youth.

However this be, it may be said that in general calm reason and public opinion, enlightened by frequent explanations, have already dealt justly with the authors of the opposition; that the inhabitants having at length better comprehended the true ends of the Law, its utility, its importance, and the means of attaining its object with certainty, have set themselves to work in good earnest, have contributed to raise among themselves the sum required by Law, and the success which they have obtained, under the auspices of the School Commissioners, constitutes at the same time the welfare of the children and the eulogy of the contributors.

Thus, it may be said, that notwithstanding the efforts of the opposition, notwithstanding the defects of the Law, wherever the inhabitants have been well counselled and advised and the local authorities well disposed, and so have acted with good faith, concord, harmony, and perseverance in their proceedings for the execution of the Law and of their duty, this execution has been easy, and followed by a result most satisfactory to all;—from which it may be reasonably concluded, that if the opposition had everywhere left our people to their natural good sense, free to follow without constraint or hindrance their own inclination for the instruction of their children—free, at least, to follow the well meant advice of their true friends, and in particular of their Pastors, at all times so zealous for the public welfare, the working of the Law would have everywhere been immediate, uniform, and most advantageous to the rising generation.

Besides proofs of the favorable disposition of the people in general for the instruction of their children, have been given for a number of years back. At the time of the expiration of the Act of Elementary Education on the 1st of May 1836, the number of Schools amounted to 1530. Under the operation of the Act of 1841, which expired in the month of July last, the Report for 1843 makes the number of Schools amount to 1298, those for 1844 to 1832 (the Reports for the year 1843 including a number of Schools independent of the Commissioners or Syndics, but well recommended,) and those for that part of 1845 elapsed before the 1st of July last, shew that 1737 Schools, under the control of the Commissioners or Syndics, were in activity during this period of instruction. I have reason to believe that, in despite of all the difficulties which have accompanied and retarded the operation of the present Act, the number of Schools which were in operation during the first part of 1845 is very nearly the same; for every day the working of the Law acquires a new extension and a new vigour. Since monies have been set apart by the Legislature (7 Vict. chapter 9,) to aid in building School-houses or in making repairs of consequence, application has been made for about 230 houses, for 200 of which £7443 17s. 2d. has been already accorded; and the value of these 200 houses, before the grant of this sum, was, by the award of Arbitrators, £16,585 19 3,—and I receive daily new demands.

But this gratifying success is still far from being what it would have been without the efforts of the opposition; there are localities where it is partial only, others where it is yet a nullity. In these latter, the inhabitants, bowed beneath the weight of an undue influence, incline as formerly towards the poisoned source of prejudices, and abandon themselves to all the deceitful illusions of which they are the principal and the cause. The good counsels and the good examples given them by their fellow citizens and their friends, pointing out to them the respect and submission which every subject, which every reasonable man owes to the Laws of the land, the duty which is imposed on him by every law to give his children that instruction of which they have need, and the happy effects resulting therefrom,—all these facts have yet failed to make them sensible of the light which they throw on the false position in which they themselves are placed by certain individuals more desirous of a momentary command over men whose misfortune it is to be too confiding, and more ambitious of acquiring the ephemeral reputation of a day than of contributing with a good grace to the permanent welfare and happiness of nearly 200,000 children, eager to divide the intellectual food. There are also localities where the inhabitants, indifferent or apathetic, either do nothing to conform to the Law, or directly to oppose it, flattering themselves that it will be repealed or modified, so as to require nothing at their hands, and thus sacrifice to doubtful hopes, to improbable results, the certain and durable advantages which might be unfailingly secured to their children, by the faithful execution of the existing School Law.

II.

THE DEFECTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACT.

The present School Act contains defects, consisting of inconsistencies, obscurities in certain clauses, &c., which destroy that concatenation which is always looked for, and which is so necessary in a Law. These discrepancies are so many obstacles to its successful working; and this fact should cause no surprise. Passed hastily in a general Committee of the Whole House at the end of last Session, together with the Act establishing Rural Municipalities, and both engrossed in the same night, being the eve of the day when Parliament was prorogued, it was impossible that these two Acts, which require, besides, more experience than it has yet been possible to obtain, to make them perfect Acts, could be without defects.

The regular working of the present School Act depends in great part on the co-operation of the Municipal Councils, and these having frequently not thought proper to meet, even for the object of Education, (although they are by the 36th Section required to find the pecuniary means for the support of the Schools,) the result has been that this Law has been almost universally deprived of the mainspring which should give impulse to its whole operation.

This unfortunate union of the School Act with the Act of Municipalities took place contrary to all expectation, the whole tenor of the School Act shewing clearly enough that this union is the effect of an error, giving the Act a turn quite opposed to the evident intention of the Legislature; the result is, that there exists throughout the Law, a disorder and confusion which have made many of its principal clauses absolutely impracticable, without having recourse to exceptional means adopted by common consent, a course difficult, dangerous, and often impossible, mainly on account of the opposition which, in almost every locality, drags into its ranks some of those who are bound to contribute.

The same duties, the same obligations, are, in several different clauses, given simultaneously to the School Commissioners and to the Parish Municipalities. Hence has resulted in certain cases a conflict of authorities and powers extremely difficult to reconcile with the well-understood interests of Education. In other, and more numerous cases, the two constituted bodies, the School Commissioners and the Municipal authorities, to avoid taking the responsibility of proceedings, the legality and the success of which they were equally doubtful of, refer from one to the other, the Act of Education, and whatever it may require from one or the other, or from both conjointly,—that is to say; the levying of the sum necessary to meet, with the promised aid of Government, the wants of the Schools and of the Teachers.

Juriconsults having been consulted, some have given it as their opinion that the School Commissioners are bound to levy on immovable property, the sum required by Law, unless they should have recourse for this end to voluntary subscription; and others that the Municipal Council has exclusively the right of compelling the inhabitants to make up the said sum, under the authority of the 36th Section:—Others, in fine, penetrating more profoundly into the mysteries of the Law, declared seriously, that neither the School Commissioners nor the Municipal Council of the Parish have legally the power of compelling the inhabitants to contribute towards making up, by an assessment on their immovable property, the above mentioned sum, required by the 27th Section. So that the School Commissioners of certain localities, who are well disposed, desiring to find the means of keeping in operation, those Schools at least which were already in operation under the Act which expired on the first of July last, find themselves compelled, as well by the ambiguity of the Law, as by the strongly expressed wish of the inhabitants not to be assessed, to have recourse to voluntary subscriptions.

Subscription was then, at the outset, generally adopted, with a success immediate and worthy of all praise in certain Parishes; the list of which should be inserted here, did it not afford too humiliating a contrast for the numerous localities where subscription has been but a deceitful means, and has had little or no success. The inhabitants invited, solicited, pressed by the friends of instruction, and especially by the clergy, to subscribe, to acquit themselves towards the School-law, of the duty imposed by all other laws on every citizen, and in particular on every father of a family, either subscribed but very little, and as if to rid themselves of importunity, or obstinately refused every species of contribution, or else consented only on conditions incompatible with the duties of the School Commissioners, and consequently unacceptable. In certain localities, where the inhabitants in the first instance, displayed some generosity in subscribing voluntarily, they afterwards refused to pay the School Commissioners the amount of their subscriptions, under pretext that they had exercised over them a power which they had not by law, and contributed them to a momentary triumph, of which the opposition boasts even at the present day.

Then, the well-disposed School Commissioners finding themselves deprived of the Local School Fund, (which might be called the principal Fund, since unless this fund is raised, they cannot claim the amount offered by the Legislature, for the support of the Schools,)

resolved to have recourse to the power, given them under the authority of the ninth Article of the 20th Section, of exacting the moderate sum of fifteen pence per month, and often even a less sum, to be paid for each child frequenting the Schools under their control. But alas! even this light contribution was in certain localities refused them, and the inhabitants, to avoid the suit at law, which might have been brought against them to compel them to pay it, withdrew their children from School, or if they consented to pay it, it was only on the express condition that it should be in place of their contribution by subscription or assessment, as the case might be, and should go towards making up the amount to which they are besides required to contribute, to equal the sum due by the locality. It is in this manner, that in a number of places, the fundamental condition of the Law is fulfilled, or rather is literally eluded, and the Schools, and the Masters who direct them, drag on languidly for want of liberal and sufficient means. The School Commissioners remained then without means, as without power. These facts are known to every one, especially to those whose love and zeal for the instruction of youth have induced them to observe closely the march of events.

The power which was given to the School Commissioners, by the 7th and 11th Articles of the 20th Section of the School Act, to levy on the inhabitants the sum required by the 27th section, has been taken from them by the 36th and 37th Sections, under the authority of which it has apparently devolved on the Rural Municipality, and the power of exacting, over and above this sum, the amount of fifteen pence per month, under the authority of the 9th Article of the 20th Section, exists only in so far as the children frequent the Schools, so that badly-disposed parents have been able easily to avoid the suit of the School Commissioners for the recovery of this small sum, whenever and as often as they may have thought fit; for that purpose they had but to withdraw their children from the Schools.

And thus, therefore, with respect to this contribution to be exacted to form the local School Fund, it may be said that the Law has been easily eluded by the parents; and their poor children, withdrawn from the Schools and going forth without instruction, have been the unhappy victims of the indifference, the apathy, or the opposition which has caused it. If, for any reason, the Legislature thinks fit to continue this mode of aiding to form the local School Fund, the enactments of the Law to this effect should be such as to give the School Commissioners the power of exacting in a summary way from solvent parents, the sum of fifteen pence per month, for each resident child of from five to sixteen years of age, and this whether the children attend School or not.

1^o Besides, the School Commissioners have not, by the Law, any means at their disposal for the re-imbursement of the expenses of the suits thus made necessary. To draw, for this end, on the School Fund, is beyond their authority, and even, if it were not, it would be diminishing resources already too limited to keep up the number of good Schools which is required. Now, the need, or at least the embarrassment, is increasing day by day in this respect, from the circumstance that those who are to contribute are each desirous of having a School at their own door.

The want of means to place the School Commissioners in a state to sue for the recovery of the contributions required by the Law, and the fear of an appeal, with which they have been in every case threatened by the opposition, has not permitted them to have recourse to compulsion, and in many localities they remain to this day without means or resources to meet the wants of the teachers.

In many of the United States, (and assuredly it will not be said, that the Laws there are not liberal, popular, democratic even,) the Treasurer of the School Commissioners is authorised by the Law to sue those neglecting to subscribe for the recovery of their contributions, simply on his deposition under oath before a Magistrate, who, on this being done, gives the Treasurer a Writ of summary and irrevocable Execution, for the recovery of the amount required by the Law, with the costs of seizure and sale only, for there are no others. The proceeding, as is manifest, is very short, very simple, and not at all expensive, as well as very certain in its result, and very proper for the prevention of that spirit of resistance and litigation, which the opposition has labored to inculcate everywhere in the minds of our peaceable inhabitants. This Legislation is favorable to the best interests of the instruction of youth, as also to public order, harmony and peace; and I believe it to be desirable, that, from the same motives we should adopt for Lower Canada the same mode of action.

2^o In any case, there are provisions in the present Law not of a nature to become generally advantageous to the instruction of youth; for instance, the liberty left to the School Commissioners to attempt in the first instance, to raise from the inhabitants, by voluntary subscription, a sum equal to that which is offered yearly by Government for the support of the Schools under their control, and then if this mode should not succeed, to have recourse to taxation on real property for the same object, and finally the right of exacting, in addition, the sum of fifteen pence per month, for each child attending a Commissioner's School. These provisions are so many hindrances to the well working of the Education Act; and I am convinced that, if these enactments are retained, it will be at least constrained, retarded, and for a

long time languishing and uncertain in its progress. The experience of this year has strongly corroborated the opinion which I have always had on this subject, that is to say, that it is always better to ask the inhabitants together, and under one sole head, or one sole name, for the amount which it is intended to exact from them, as a contribution for giving instruction to their children, giving them at the same time whatever delay they may require, in the course of the Scholastic year, to pay it.

It is certain that the trial which has been made of voluntary subscription is far from having answered, in general, the expectations of those who had recourse to it; and, in many places where it has taken place, it may be said that it is to the great detriment of the instruction of the children and of the tranquillity of the inhabitants. The fact is that voluntary contribution is not only a slow and uncertain means, but it is also unjust, and generally impracticable.

In numerous localities, after having in vain tried voluntary subscription and trusted it too long, it has been found necessary to have recourse to assessment on real property, and this often at the requisition of the inhabitants themselves, the greater part of whom have perceived that such mode of contribution was the most easy, the lightest to be borne, the most just and the most certain; perhaps, also, the most economical, at least under existing circumstances, from which they themselves conclude that the mode of contribution by assessment on real property is much to be preferred.

3^o In fact, the way to make the contribution weigh lightly on each, is to divide it equally among all those who are to contribute. Now the mode of making it weigh equally on all the contributors, in a just and equitable manner, is to do it by a general assessment, as proposed by the existing law; and the means of making this contribution certain is to make it, in all cases, obligatory on all those who are to contribute. Otherwise, there are people who will always have their reasons for not contributing to the great work of public instruction, or for not contributing in proportion to their means. The inhabitants, in general, are prepared for, and, in certain localities, are even desirous of, this measure, which has now become necessary, and which operates so well in all countries where it is law, as in Upper Canada and the United States. Taught by experience, the inhabitants will in general submit most willingly to this mode of contribution, if, within a certain time, it becomes obligatory everywhere. The information which I have been enabled to procure from all parts of the country, on this subject, is strongly in support of what is here advanced.

It must, however, be well understood that when, for the success of public instruction, a cause of paramount common and vital interest for the country, I have thought and still think it my duty to recommend compulsion, it is only with reference to those who refuse or are opposed to every thing, and not with reference to those who, full of zeal and love for the public welfare, make efforts and sacrifices to procure for our youth the benefits of instruction, which are often beyond their means. Now this is generally the case, when all the citizens in a condition to contribute do not all do so, or not in a manner proportioned to their means. All the burden then falls on the friends of the cause, who, though everywhere numerous, could not long continue to defray alone all the expenses necessary to its success. Many of them are already fatigued and disgusted with this state of things, and complain that the Legislature has neglected both themselves and the cause of public instruction, which, for several years, they supported courageously, in the expectance of proper aid. I may say that many have complained to me bitterly on this subject. I am, therefore, most decidedly of opinion that, to do them justice, and further to ensure the success of the working of the Law, it should be everywhere and in all cases obligatory and coercive, at least after a brief delay given during the first year, (at the discretion of the School Commissioners) to make up otherwise the sum required by the Law. An obligatory Law on this subject has led to a good result everywhere else where it is in operation, and there is nothing to oppose the conclusion that a similar Law here would lead to the same results.

On the other hand, the right of exacting the sum of fifteen pence per month, for each child attending school, serves, in truth, only to embarrass the School Commissioners by multiplying their labors, their responsibility, and their solicitude, and by exciting opposition on the part of the indifferent and the apathetic.

In some localities, when it has been wished to facilitate the proceedings by depending on the good will of the inhabitants, previously consulted on this subject, the sum required by law has been doubled and the inhabitants, in consequence, exempted from paying the fifteen pence per month, and it is certain that this mode of action has been more agreeable to the inhabitants and has given less hold to the opposition.

4^o It is moreover certain that, in general, if nothing is done beyond raising an amount equal to the Government grant, the School Commissioners will not have the necessary means of defraying expenses, because they will obtain, only with great difficulty and from only a small number of parents, the fifteen pence per month. Left, as they are at present, to judge

of the means and the solvency of the parents, they will be always embarrassed in their decision by considerations of interest or charity, by family sympathies or sympathies of neighbourhood, or by feelings of friendship for the parents of the children at the expense of the Teachers.

In Upper Canada, the local authorities have the power of doubling that part of the grant which is offered them for the diffusion of Education, and they find in this manner the means necessary for this object. More easily, without harassing the contributors for that purpose, who would be generally satisfied with the view of the advantages resulting therefrom for their children, if a very considerable part of the contribution were not devoted to the payment of the Township and County Superintendents. Now, it may be generally concluded that this mode of procedure would be followed here by the same result. The local authorities might nearly double the grant of Government, (whenever circumstances might require and allow of it, without inconveniencing the contributors,) for all the requirements of Public Instruction. The School Law, passed in 1841, provided for this, by enjoining the local authorities to raise all that was necessary, either for the support of the Teachers, or for the erection of School Houses, for books, or for fuel, and had it been faithfully put in execution everywhere, the inhabitants in general would have been soon convinced that this manner of contributing to the instruction of their children, is at the same time more easy and more profitable for these latter. I am, therefore, of opinion, that the success of Public Instruction, as well as concord, would be much better insured in the Parishes, by exacting from the inhabitants but one single annual contribution, by assessment on their real property, according to the respective value of the same.

We deceive ourselves, I think, in this matter, by imagining that the means of interesting parents in the Education of their children, is to exact from them a certain monthly sum, over and above the amount of their contribution in proportion, to the value of their immovable property; it is more likely to harass them, and disgust them with Education, by inducing them to think ill of the measures and means taken to procure the benefit of it to their children. But, not to take them by surprise, this new enactment of the Law should not begin to take effect, in an obligatory manner, till after the first Monday in July, 1847.

In the meanwhile, the Law, in my opinion, should so operate, that if, on the 1st day of August, the Commissioners have not succeeded in making up by voluntary subscription the sum required by Law, they may be authorized, throughout the course of the scholastic year, to levy this sum by assessment on immovable property; and as there are still localities where this sum has not been made up for the current year, it might be desirable to give the School Commissioners the power of making it up in this manner, during the rest of the scholastic year.

5°. In other localities, proceedings have been taken, it is true, by the local authorities to make up the sum annually required by the Law, but often so late, and in so irregular a manner, that, on the one hand, doubts have been raised as to their legality, and on the other, a number of Schools, from those and other causes, have been opened and put in operation, at a time when it was no longer possible to complete the number of months of instruction as required by Law.

It would be then of extreme importance to legalize, by a clause to this effect, added to the Act, all the proceedings of the local authorities, and the Schools kept in good faith, less than eight months during the present scholastic year. It would be also important to legalize by the same clause all the elections and nominations of School Commissioners, which have taken place during the present scholastic year, for, having been generally made in a very irregular manner, there are strong doubts as to the legality of the greater part of them.

I must not proceed further without returning to the subject of the means of aid, and making some further observations which I regard as most important, considering the actual condition of the country.

6°. It is notorious that the sum offered by Government, to be equalled by the contributions of the inhabitants is insufficient to keep up, in each locality, as many good Schools as are required, even when the fifteen-pence per month are exacted, from those parents who can pay it, for each child of age to attend the Schools established.

It is equally notorious, that there are localities where the inhabitants are incapable even of raising a sum equal to the Government grant, notwithstanding their good will, and their unremitting efforts to do so.

There are new settlements, and localities among the older ones, where the inhabitants are unable to raise a sum equal to the Government grant, without depriving themselves and their children of even the necessities of life. I have visited some of these localities, where the people are in a state of privation and suffering truly afflicting. I know one of these localities, in the District of Quebec, where there are not less than 200 families, and in which, since the commencement of last winter, children have been put on rations, so as to prolong for them a miserable existence. This sad state of things occurs in its worst form, when there is a failure of the potatoe crops, which have more frequently, and more completely failed in the Lower, than in the Upper Districts of this portion of the Province.

The children in these unfortunate parts have, from their very poverty, still more need of instruction than those of the localities where the inhabitants are comparatively more fortunate. The Law, however, is obligatory on all, and the Government grant must be equalled, or they must be deprived of this feeble annual support. The facts which I have just adduced, call for an exception in the conditions of the Law, in favour of the indigent localities where the contributions, being equalled by Government, out of the sum thus accruing to them, might enable the School Commissioners to keep up one good School at least. I think therefore that the Superintendent should be authorized by Law, to adopt this mode of action, so often as the School Commissioners should transmit to his office an additional certificate to this effect, on the part of the leading men of the locality.

The principle of exception, however, which I claim in favour of the indigent localities is already admitted by Law. The 27th Section exacts that to be entitled to a share of the grant, a School should be frequented each day by at least fifteen children, excepting in case of an epidemic malady. This, then, is an exception in one case, because the Law conceives the impossibility of conforming to the rule, and it appears to me that in any other case where there might be an equal impossibility to conform to the rule, from the extreme poverty of the inhabitants, the Law should permit in their favour the same exception.

7^o. The fact is, that the Government Grant, as offered to each locality as part of the general School Fund, is in all cases insufficient, and that, seeing the state of difficulty and poverty in which the greater part of the inhabitants are found, the interests of Public Instruction require, that the general grant be augmented by some thousands of pounds. I cannot, then, press too warmly on the legislative authorities, the adoption of an amendment so important as that, which would authorize the offering this augmentation to the people of the country. This increase of the grant could not be better employed than in favour of the Model Schools, the Masters of which should have a fixed salary, and one which would secure for the direction of these Schools, well-informed and devoted Teachers. By means of the valuable services of these men, able pupils, such as might be vainly sought in other Schools, would be constantly formed, for agriculture and every branch of industry.

If, in the course of the year, my position makes it incumbent on me to follow, and cause to be strictly followed, the exigencies of the School Law, I should be happy to have at least the opportunity of being the advocate of the poor man, with the constituted authorities, and the solicitor of whatever he may require for the instruction of his family; and I venture to flatter myself, that sooner or later, my feeble voice will be favorably listened to.

8^o. In any case, the Grant of Government whatever it be, should be made every six months in favour of the localities where the inhabitants may have fulfilled the conditions of the Law, and given proof of the same to this office by the Report of the School Commissioners, and of the Treasurer-Secretary to that effect. The necessities of the Teachers call imperiously for this measure, especially in view of the moderate sum which is promised them for their services. I solicit it, then, in a special manner on their behalf, after the expiration of the present year.

9^o. The circumstance of the School Law being only temporary, has given the opposition an additional argument, very powerful and even very plausible for resisting the praiseworthy efforts everywhere made by the friends of Public Instruction, to put it into operation and obtain from it good results. This circumstance, which the experience of the past has proved to us, to be always very detrimental to the instruction of the people, has served as a basis for a thousand different speculations in the hands of the opposition; to hinder and paralyse all that might be said or done in support of the Law, and in favour of putting it into operation.—The opposition told the people, that the law is in truth only a proposition to be by them adopted, or rejected according as they might think fit: that the Law, proposed as it is, is arbitrary, tyrannical, unjust, oppressive, absurd and impracticable, and that the most certain means of being emancipated from or of obtaining a mitigation of its conditions, was to oppose its working and reject it altogether. This reasoning was at first sufficiently plausible for the most part, and acquired a new force by the refusal of many Municipal Councils to levy the sum required by the 27th Section of the Law, to equal that which is offered yearly for the support of the Schools under the control of the School Commissioners. Men of standing in society, have been known to hold publicly, at the Church doors, this specious language to the assembled inhabitants, and to turn them aside, as far as lay in their power, from being, as they have always heretofore been docile, to the charitable and patriotic voice of their pastors, and of the other friends of their true welfare. On the other hand, the friends of Education are continually in dread of seeing the fruit of their labours and of their sacrifices, annihilated by the expiration of the Law, as has already unfortunately happened in 1836, when 1,530 Schools, then in full operation, were for the most part closed and many School Houses fell into ruin for want of means. It is, therefore, extremely important to make the existing Act permanent.

10^o. In many localities, the School Commissioners are making great efforts for the erection of School Houses, and generally with distinguished success. A much greater number, however, would have been built, if the spirit of opposition, (prevalent in certain places,) had not hindered the School Commissioners from acquiring lands for serving as sites. In

some cases the inhabitants refused to give or to sell property for this object, and the interests of instruction have considerably suffered thereby. It would be necessary, therefore, to authorize the School Commissioners to take possession of the lands which they might require from time to time, for the erection of School Houses, paying for them according to the award of Arbitrators, similarly to what is practised in our towns for other purposes.

11^o One circumstance which has greatly contributed to prevent the School Act from working usefully, is that the Commissioners, being elected with the formalities required by law, have the right of remaining in power, even when they do not act, and when reckoning on the indifference or the apathy of the inhabitants, they are themselves opposed to the Law, as in many localities has been made apparent.

The 49th section of the Act, which imposes a certain penalty on School Commissioners refusing or neglecting to execute the duties of the honorable charge confided to them, is of no effect in localities where the inhabitants are indifferent, apathetic, or reluctant, since they have the power of electing whomsoever they please, to be School Commissioners, and thus of eluding the Law.

For these reasons, and others, the power given the Governor under the authority of the 11th Section, should be, in my opinion, applicable also to the above mentioned circumstances or cases, otherwise it is possible that the Law may be eluded in some places, and the poor children may continue to be the unhappy victims of the inactivity of the local authorities. The possibility of one sole locality falling into this condition, would be sufficient to necessitate a similar enactment in the School Law.

12^o The right of exacting from the Seigniors, the fortieth part of the sum required by the Law, has been also the cause of great difficulty in the working of the School Act, and has even stopped it altogether, when in other respects matters seemed favorable. The Seigniors in many places have refused to pay this fortieth part, or have opposed the right of assessing their mills, and in case of persistence on the part of the local authorities to exercise this right, some Seigniors, profiting by the ambiguity of the Law, with reference to the power of levying the sum required by assessment on immovable property, have opposed everything, and everything there is in suspense.

I have, however, the satisfaction of being able to observe here, to the praise of some Seigniors, friends of Education, that not only have they most willingly submitted to all the requisitions of the School Law, but also, that they have courageously taken the lead, and borne an active part in all the proceedings of the local authorities, aiding them by their contributions and their advice, for the proper working of the Law; and the results of their efforts have been as beneficial to the public welfare, as honorable to themselves. How desirable it were, that everywhere, after the example of these worthy Seigniors, those in an elevated position should thus unite the weight of their fortune, their wealth and their influence, to the other means proper for securing the useful operation of the Education Act.

However this be, it is certain that the requisition of the one-fortieth aforesaid, from the Seigniors, independently of their share of contribution, in proportion to the value of their real property, will always excite remonstrances, and perhaps also much confusion in the well-working of the School Act. Besides, the more easy the means of making up the required sum, the more prompt, regular and certain, will be this working of the School Act, in itself so desirable.—I believe, then, that, to simplify the proceedings, and silence every kind of claim, it would be more advantageous to Public Instruction, to repeal entirely that part of the Law which exacts from the Seigniors one-fortieth of the sum required by the 27th Section, independently of their contributions under general provisions of the School Act.

13^o But there is another procedure, which, in certain places, has also excited many claims and much discontent; that is, the assessment on properties consecrated to religious purposes, and even to education. Whenever I have been consulted on this subject, I have thought it my duty to advise the local authorities to exempt these properties from the general assessment; those of the first kind should be considered sacred, and those of the second, as destined and at present employed daily for the purposes of education. I believe, then, that for these reasons, and many concomitant ones, the Legislature should exempt these kinds of real property from the otherwise general action of the School Laws. Without this exemption there may result profanations in the first case, and in the second, a discouragement which would operate to the detriment of Education.

14^o Two circumstances in particular, which were inevitable at the outset of the operation of the present School Act, have contributed, as much as any thing else, to embarrass, to retard, even to prevent its well-working:—one is the universally too great number of School Commissioners elected or named under the authority of the Law, and the other is the paucity of well instructed and devoted men among them.

I have always been of opinion that a literary qualification for School Commissioners is necessary for the well-working of an Act of Elementary Education, and that the too great number of Commissioners serves rather to embarrass than to facilitate its progress, and the experience of this year has greatly contributed to confirm me in this opinion, which I have formed after observations made, through a number of years, on this subject.

Under the operation of the Educational Acts passed, at various times, in the Lower Canada Parliament, the number of School Commissioners has never exceeded five, and, in the last of these Acts, which expired on the first of May, 1836, it had been reduced to three only. Now it is universally known, that there was then more harmony and more uniformity in the local execution of the School Acts. These Laws, it is true, did not exact any literary qualification for the School Commissioners, and this defect soon made itself felt. But, by limiting the number of the School Commissioners to three, or at most to five, the choice was generally made to fall on fit and proper persons, whose administration was not embarrassed by the blind intervention of incapable persons.

The great embarrassment of which the too great number of School Commissioners without instruction has been the cause, has often degenerated into insurmountable obstacles in the local administration of the Schools under their control, and has contributed not a little to disgust the members of the clergy who found themselves associated, by the Law, with such men.

Some members of the clergy have found themselves, by the force of circumstances, in a continual dilemma, that it is to say, either compelled to resign their charge as School Commissioners, without having by the law the right of doing so, or to refuse to take part in proceedings which might compromise them, and thus to expose themselves, in either case, to the penalty imposed by the 49th Section.

Under the authority of an enactment of the law, (which is found in the last part of the 15th Section, in place of being where it ought naturally to be, in the 5th,) the *Curé* or the resident Minister of the most numerous religious denomination, is of right a School Commissioner. This enactment of the Law has excited many appeals, partly from the people who, in certain cases, complained of being disfranchised by the imposition of men who were made School Commissioners without their concurrence, and partly from the members of the clergy themselves, who, under certain disagreeable circumstances, complained that the Law imposes on them, without their consent, a charge, the duties of which are difficult, sometimes even impossible to fulfil usefully, and which they must nevertheless fulfil faithfully, under pain of the fine which may be imposed on them at the instance of any contributor to the local School Fund.

I believe, that if, from regard to the interests of Public Instruction, the Legislature thinks fit better to insure, by a particular enactment of the Law, the important services of devoted and worthy men among the members of the Clergy, without their previous consent to co-operate and put it in operation, they should have the right of resigning their charge, without on that account exposing themselves to any penalty, unless they have been elected with, and at the same time as the other School Commissioners.

15^o. The 2nd Section of the School Act gives to the minority of the inhabitants of each locality professing a different religious creed from that of the majority, the right of separating therefrom and of electing Trustees to take the direction of the Dissentient Schools. But the exercise of this right does not deprive them of that of voting at the election of the School Commissioners for the same locality, and the Dissentients having, in certain cases, thought fit to avail themselves thereof, serious inconveniences have thus arisen. It has happened also, that the School Commissioners, having been elected Trustees of Dissentient Schools, have continued to occupy their place among the other School Commissioners, which is not certainly in accordance with the motives which the Law imputes to them in separating from the majority, nor with the principles which should direct their action towards an opposite end. I think therefore, that it is most important that the hereinbefore cited Section should be amended, so that the Dissentients should not have the power of voting at the election of School Commissioners, nor be themselves School Commissioners for the same locality, and that the seat of a School Commissioner become dissentient should be *ipso facto* vacated. In the same way, the inhabitants of the majority should not vote at the election of the School Trustees, nor have the power of being themselves Trustees of Dissentient Schools.

Some Dissentients having furnished to the local School Fund, by assessment on their real property, a larger sum than that which would have fallen due to them according to the number of their population, under the provisions of the Section above cited, complain of this result, which they consider as an exaction. Although the principle of the Law is to oblige the more fortunate inhabitants to contribute to the means of giving instruction to the children of those who are less fortunate, because Education is not merely a personal good, but also, a good common to all, it being considered that it should more or less profit all members of society; still, to silence all claims of this kind on the part of the Dissentient, it is to be considered whether, in the event of the particular case to which I allude, the minority should have by law the right of claiming the entire amount of their contribution, with a part of the grant made for the support of the Schools of the locality, according to the number of its population compared with that of the inhabitants of the majority, and *vice versa*.

16^o. The 20th Section of the Education Act gives impliedly to the School Commissioners of each locality the power of selecting the books intended for the use of the Schools under their control. But the manner in which the body of Commissioners is often composed, does not give the parents a sufficient guarantee that the books will be well selected, especially as

regards morality and religion. It is, however, extremely important, in the selection of the books, not only to exercise care and prudence, but also, to have such learning and information on this point as not to incur the danger of being sometimes grossly deceived. Now the Members of the Clergy possess, from their station, the information necessary for this purpose. It is, then, very desirable that, as concerns religion and morals, the Clergy of each religious denomination should have by law the exclusive right of making, for the use of their Schools, the selection of the books which are specially connected with religion and morals. I cannot, therefore, be too urgent in recommending the Legislature to add to the present School Law this enactment, which eminently concerns each religious denomination, and the public morals.

17°. The Fourth Article of the 20th Section of the School Act, concludes by giving the School Commissioners a power, which is certainly too arbitrary as respects the Teachers, that of "removing them at their pleasure," a power, the use of which is thus indiscreetly entrusted in the hands of Commissioners without information, and sometimes even under the influence of the party spirit which has presided at their Election, has been the cause of much trouble, discouragement, and alarm among well qualified Teachers, who feel all the importance and sacredness of the mission with which they are charged. They should, without doubt, be subject to the control of the local authority: but this authority should itself be subjected to rules which would prevent its becoming arbitrary and unjust towards a class of men whose services are so valuable. The enactments of the Law should, on the contrary, tend to elevate them in the public opinion, and to place them in that distinguished position which they should occupy among their fellow men and in good society; otherwise, they cannot make, on the intellect and the heart of their scholars, other than a feeble impression.

Respectable and trustworthy Teachers are not generally, as yet, either sufficiently numerous, or sufficiently permanent, solely because they do not, in the course of their teaching meet with sufficient consideration or means of existence befitting their station. It is probable, however, that by means of a Legislation more liberal in itself, and more consonant with what is needed in this respect, moral and well-informed young people, would willingly consecrate themselves to Tuition, and that every day would thus see an increase of the number of good Teachers, who would give proofs of their zeal, devotion and steadiness, whenever they might find encouragement. I believe, then, that to prevent any arbitrary conduct towards the Teachers, it is necessary to enact that the School Commissioners shall not have the power of dismissing them, except on account of incapacity, negligence, insubordination, or immorality, established by an inquiry before the body of the assembled Commissioners.

18°. The means of raising the Teachers in the public opinion, is to establish for their qualification, Boards of Examiners, similar to those which exist elsewhere, and especially in New Brunswick. This is also the means of giving to teaching the character and permanence of a profession, of a fixed station, offering its Members a guarantee of the considerations and resources which they require. This guarantee, by encouraging the Teachers to remain each at his post, would assure their activity, their steadiness, and their devotion to the task imposed on them. This guarantee of fitting considerations, and resources in teaching, would also serve as a powerful attraction for our well-informed youth, who, on leaving our Colleges and our public Schools, seek to find, exclusive of profession, already too crowded, some kind of employment analogous to their education, their taste, and their vocation. It cannot be concealed, that without this guarantee, teaching will never be either sufficiently important, or sufficiently useful. But having already spoken sufficiently at length in my Report of 1842, (page 8, *et seq.*) of the Boards of Examiners, I will confine myself to bringing under the notice of the Legislature, the manner in which, in my opinion, these Boards should be composed and established, with their powers and privileges.

The Boards of Examiners might be named, as the School Commissioners are, under the authority of the eleventh Section of the existing Law; they might be composed of fourteen active Members, and in accordance with the principles of the forty-first Section, that is to say, seven Roman Catholics and seven Protestants, forming two distinct and separate Boards, each with the same privileges, the same powers, and the same duties, to fulfil separately; five forming a *quorum* with the Chairman, who, in case of an equal division of votes, should have a casting vote. These Boards might be established in the Cities of Montreal and Quebec, only, where considering the facility of communication which there is at present with these Cities, they would amply suffice all exigencies, at least for the present.

The duties of the Boards of Examiners would be:—1°. To meet once in every three months, on the requisition of one or more Candidates for teaching given to the Secretary at least fifteen days beforehand:—2°. To admit to examination those Candidates only, who shall each be provided with a Certificate of age, and of moral character, signed by the *cure* or minister of his religious faith, and by at least three School Commissioners of the locality, where he may have resided for the last six months:—3°. To return the said Certificate to the bearer, after having taken an authentic copy of it, to be entered in the Register of Deliberations, in case the examination terminates favorably:—4°. To deliver Diplomas or Certificates of capacity for teaching to each successful Candidate, signed by the Chairman and Secretary, mentioning distinctly the particular kind of Tuition to which the Candidate devotes himself,

mentioning also, that the Certificates of moral character and of age, required by law, have been exhibited to the Board, and mentioning besides the names which they bear, and that a copy thereof has been taken by the Secretary or his substitute :—5°. To deliver in like manner to each successful Candidate, a Diploma or Certificate of qualification for teaching, for the sum of five shillings, payable to the Secretary, or to his Deputy, for all office costs and fees :—6°. To keep a faithful list of Candidates admitted to teach :—7°. To give, after each meeting, information of the admissions thereat, to the Superintendent, within fifteen days of their date :—8°. To divide the licensed Teachers into three classes,—that is to say; those of the Educational Establishments, termed Academies; those of Model Schools; and those of Schools purely Elementary :—9°. To designate in the Certificate of admission, and in the Register, the number of Teachers admitted, to teach by numbers, as also the class to which they belong :—10°. To exact, during the Examination, proof of the following qualifications,—That is to say; for the Teachers of Academies, all the branches of a Classical Education, because they are destined to prepare Scholars for the same; for the Teachers of Model Schools, qualifications sufficient to enable them to teach with success, reading, writing, grammar, the analysis of the parts of speech, arithmetic in all its branches, book-keeping, geography, the use of the globes, linear drawing, the elements of mensuration, composition, especially as applied to the Epistolary Art. For the Teachers of Elementary Schools, all that is required to enable them to teach with success, reading, writing, the elements of grammar, and of geography, and arithmetic, at least as far as the Rule of Three, inclusive.

The existence and operation of the Board of Examiners would serve as a means of introducing respectable Teachers, who doubtless, would not fail to avail themselves of it, since those among them who have the spirit of their calling and can appreciate the importance of their station, are already making such praiseworthy efforts to make themselves useful and to raise Teaching in the public estimation, by forming themselves into Associations, which promise to be of great advantage, both to society, and to themselves.

The operation of the Boards of Examiners, would also serve as a protection for efficient Teachers, against that troop of incapables, who, up to the present time, have incumbered Elementary Tuition, to the great detriment of instruction.

But to the end that the operation of the Boards of Examiners may obtain these so desirable results, it would be necessary that, after a certain number of years, the School Commissioners should no longer be at liberty to employ, as Teachers, men who are unprovided with Certificates of qualification and good moral character, as above mentioned. This would be the means of producing everywhere sacrifices and efforts on the part of Teachers, to conform themselves to the Law in this respect, for the purpose of passing or preparing to pass the Examination, and on the part of School Commissioners to procure Teachers furnished with Diplomas, in preference to others, or to devise means for procuring Teachers of this kind, at least by the time required by Law. The mere existence of these Boards would be a powerful means of creating and maintaining emulation everywhere.

But not to exclude immediately, from the post which they occupy, old Teachers incapable of passing or even of preparing to pass an Examination, or to restrain those Teachers who are yet young, and who may by their application to study, qualify themselves for passing a good Examination,—or to expose the School Commissioners to a defect of Teachers for the Elementary Schools, it is important to postpone the period at which these latter will be required, to employ only those Teachers who are admitted by the Boards to a date somewhat distant, say 1856, the Boards continuing their operation in other respects from the present time to that period.

And further, not to humiliate needlessly those who must already of necessity possess all the requisite qualifications for instruction, nor to subject candidates of the female sex to an undue rigour, I would propose that, every priest; minister, ecclesiastic, or person forming part of a teaching religious body, should be, by the fact itself, exempt from undergoing an Examination, as well as all persons of the female sex (even when they do not belong to a teaching religious body): these latter being subjected only to the examination of the School Commissioners of the Parish or Township where they are to teach.

In all cases, it must be most distinctly understood, that on the arrival of the period when the School Commissioners shall be confined to the Teachers admitted by the Board of Examiners, they shall be bound only to the class, and never to the individual, who may have all the capacity requisite for teaching, yet need not be employed by the School Commissioners, unless he shall possess their confidence in other respects.

If, however, for some reason or other, the Boards of Examiners should not be agreed to, the necessity for the qualification of the School Commissioners would but become more urgent, inasmuch as, in the absence of these Boards, the Commissioners are themselves the Examiners of the Teachers of the Schools under their control. The observations which I have had occasion to make on these subjects for many years past, persuade me that, without the Board of Examiners, or due qualification in the School Commissioners, or even without both, the Educational Law, even, if otherwise most perfect, will never be fully successful.

Now the means of securing, of facilitating the qualifications of the School Commissioner is to reduce their number, and if it be objected to this proposition that it would be impossible for a small number of Commissioners to oversee, in a fitting manner, all the Schools of the locality, and especially to provide each day, for their more pressing necessities, I say that, for this particular end, Administrators might be elected or named for each District, and be charged with this kind of Administration, having communication on this subject with the School Commissioners, under whose auspices they should act in all cases. This is what is practised with advantage in several of the United States; it is also what I have already had occasion to recommend the School Commissioners to do, by thus uniting to themselves collaborators for the best local execution of the law; and I have reason to believe that wherever recourse has been had to this means, the result has been favorable. Recourse has been, in particular, had to this means for the erection of School Houses.

19°. When, at the commencement of this chapter, I spoke of the connection of the School Act, with that of the Rural Municipalities, I was obliged to do so somewhat lightly; I believe therefore, considering the importance of the subject, that I should return to it. I may say, that this unfortunate connection has contributed, more than any thing else, to embarrass and hinder the regular working of the School Act, and will probably always have the same effect, because this connection renders too complicated the means of operation, and this fact, joined to a thousand others resulting therefrom, makes the two Acts incompatible.

It is, then, very important to emancipate at once, the School Act from the Act erecting Municipalities, for it is certain that they will never be able to work well together. The operation of the Municipal Act is generally subject to too many political considerations, to too many conflicting interests; and the School Act, to have a certain result, should be absolutely independent of all influence of this kind. I have always, for these reasons, been of opinion, that the union of these two Acts is incompatible with the well working of the School Act, and a second and very sad experience, has impressed upon me a conviction, which is doubtless shared by many others. There is not an amendment on which, as concerns public instruction, I believe it my duty to insist with more firmness, than that by which the School Act shall be rendered independent of every other Law. The Educational Acts, the operation of which is so regular and so effective in the United States, are absolutely independent of all other Laws.

20°. There are Parishes in which villages have been erected as separate and distinct Municipalities for Municipal purposes, and in this case, it has happened that inhabitants of Village Municipalities, availing themselves of the second Section of the School Act, have, in the middle of the Scholastic year, claimed the power of electing School Commissioners for them, and of acting independently of those who had been before elected for the whole Parish. Now, such a division of the Parish or of the Township for School purposes, seems to me, likely to embarrass greatly the working of the Law, by multiplying, without necessity, the number of Commissioners, and by dividing too much the means, especially inasmuch as these two bodies of Commissioners would often find themselves in contact, and even in opposition.

But the result would be, in many cases, if this distinction were kept up, that it would tend to deprive the inhabitants of the concessions of a part of the pecuniary aid which might otherwise revert to them in proportion to the estimated value of the village properties, to which they have in so many ways contributed to give value; which would often be a violation of the spirit of the Law, which requires that those who happen to have more resources at their disposal, should contribute proportionably towards giving instruction to the children of those who have less. In any case, this distinction would tend to deprive the inhabitants of the concessions of the information, the moral influence, and the services of the village citizens, and they, abandoned to themselves, would be generally incapable of making the School Act work usefully. Besides it is to be remarked that the Parishes or Townships from which the villages have been thus cut off, would find themselves, in most cases, virtually deprived of the advantage of a Model School, and of a Girls' School, as provided by the twentieth and twenty-ninth Sections.

Although the whole context of the School Act, seems to shew very clearly that it is only the Parish or Township Municipalities, or those formed of a union of several parts of these, which can be considered as Municipalities for the purposes of the School Act: still, as there is a difference of opinion on this subject, I believe it to be my duty, when I ask, that the School Act be made independent of the co-operation of the Municipality, to ask also, that it be amended so as to leave no doubt on this subject.

Such are the defects of the School Act, and the principal amendments which I think it my duty to recommend to be made to this Law. But I insist with greater earnestness on four of these, because they appear to me, to be of immediate and absolute necessity; that is to say:—1°. To make the Act permanent:—2°. To separate it from the Municipal Act:—3°. To legalise the elections and nominations of School Commissioners, which have taken place under the operation of the Act:—4°. Not to permit the inhabitants of the Village Municipalities, to have any other School Commissioners than those who have been elected or named for the Parish or Township.

These amendments which have been suggested to me by a knowledge of the facts, by experience, and by observation may be made without altering the Act in its fundamental principles; and in expressing the most heartfelt desire for their adoption. I believe it to be my duty, earnestly to pray the Legislature to introduce them as supplementary, so as not to drive the inhabitants from the course which has been dictated to them by the force of circumstances.

The Legislature has advanced one step, the majority of the inhabitants of this important part of the Province, have advanced a step also: the impulse has been given, the Act progresses in general towards its object, and some amendments made, as additions, will enable the School Commissioners to attain this object everywhere, and with certainty.

I hope, then, that the Legislature, guided by the sentiment which has presided at the formation of the present School Law, will not stop in its course. It will not confine its beneficence to granting an Act which gives so much hold to the opposition, and allows them to embarrass its working. The progress of the Arts and Sciences, at present so rapid everywhere else, especially among our immediate neighbours, the Americans of the United States, and the necessity, now becoming so great, that each of us should do his utmost to create among us an effective impulse to all kinds of industry, and particularly to Scientific Agriculture, call for a Legislation which shall retain nothing, in this respect, of the routine of past times, or be founded on ancient prejudices which should give place to the learning and information of the age in which we live.

RECAPITULATION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

1^o. To make the proceedings summary in every necessary suit for the recovery of the sum required by Law, on the deposition of the Treasurer-Secretary before a Magistrate of the County.

2^o. To repeal that part of the Act which exacts the sum of fifteen pence per month for each child attending School, and to exact it for each child of an age to attend School,—that is to say, from 5 to 16 years old.

3^o. To make the contribution by assessment on real property obligatory in all cases, except in the year next after the present, and except in case of extreme poverty on the part of the inhabitants, and to give the School Commissioners the whole of the scholastic year to impose it, and have it collected by the Treasurer.

4^o. To augment the contribution by assessment, and to levy under one name and in the same manner, all that is required for the support of the Schools in each locality.

5^o. To legalise all the proceedings which have been adopted to make up the sum required for the present scholastic year; to legalise the Schools which have been kept less than eight months, as also, the elections and appointments of School Commissioners which have taken place under the operation of the existing Law.

6^o. To exempt the inhabitants of indigent localities from paying the full amount of their assessments, or to leave to the School Commissioners the power of exacting a part only.

7^o. To augment the grant by some thousand pounds in favour of the Model Schools.

8^o. To allow the grant, whatever it may be, to be payable every six months, after the expiration of the present year.

9^o. To make the Act permanent.

10^o. To authorize the School Commissioners to take possession of the Lands necessary for the sites of the School Houses, on paying for the same, according to the award of Arbitrators.

11^o. To give the Government the power of appointing School Commissioners to act in place of those who, having been elected, shall not act.

12^o. To exempt the seigniors from paying the 40th of the sum required by the Law to equal the grant of the Government.

13^o. To exempt from assessment, the real property consecrated to religious purposes or to Education.

14^o. To give to the Members of the Clergy, who are Commissioners of right by the law, the power of resigning their charge, when they have not been elected by the people.

15^o. Not to leave to the dissentient inhabitants the right of voting at the election of the School Commissioners or of being School Commissioners, for the Schools of the inhabitants making part of the majority, nor to the latter the right of voting at the election of the School Trustees or of being School Trustees, for those of the minority.

16^o. To allow the Members of the Clergy the exclusive right of choosing, for the use of Schools of their respective creeds, the books having reference to morals and religion.

17^o. Not to permit the School Commissioners to dismiss Teachers, except for incapacity, negligence, insubordination, misconduct or immorality, ascertained after enquiry.

18^o. To establish Boards of Examiners for the admission of Teachers to the right of acting as such.

19^o. To separate the School Act from the Act regulating the Rural Municipalities.

20^o. Not to permit the inhabitants of the Village Municipalities to have School Commissioners separate and distinct from those of the Parish or Township.

III.

There are also various matters having reference to Public Instruction, which, though in appearance of a less pressing nature, are not less important, and do not the less require the intervention of the Legislature; these are: 1^o. The County Academies: 2^o. The Normal Schools: 3^o. A Deaf and Dumb School: 4^o. The uniformity of the books in use in the Schools: 5^o. Teaching the elementary principles of Horticulture and Agriculture in the principal Schools of the Country: 6^o. A Journal of Education.—These different subjects merit each a particular consideration and development, which I cannot give here. I shall content myself, therefore, with recommending each of them to the attention of the Legislature.

1^o. It would be of the greatest advantage to Public Instruction to have an Academy in operation in the most central place of each populous County. In New Brunswick, the Legislature grants the sum of £50 annually for each Academy. I have already had the honor to propose, in my report of 1842, that an equal sum should be offered annually to each County for the same object, and I have now precisely the same reasons for renewing the same recommendation.

2^o. If the Teachers of the Model Schools are not commissioned to form Masters for Elementary Schools, it would be advantageous to establish Normal Schools. We have already had, it is true, an unhappy experience of the ill success of these Schools in forming Masters, while they have been successful in forming Mistresses: but this partial want of success is due to circumstances which might be easily avoided, instructed as we now are by experience. Now the means of avoiding them, is to give the direction of these Schools to men, who by birth or by a long residence among us, are familiar with our manners, our usages, our tastes and our wants.

We have in the country educated fellow subjects of every origin, who have grown old in teaching, in which they have acquired by their success a well merited reputation, and it is under the tutelage of such men that our young people will always prefer placing themselves.

Our Colleges and High Schools furnish every day valuable subjects for teaching; but, besides that, the young people who leave these establishments, do not generally like to undertake purely Elementary Instruction; they would not suffice for the great and universal want of Teachers, even if they were willing. It is, therefore, much to be desired, that the Legislature should provide the means of forming a sufficient number of them, either by giving the Academies and the Model Schools the requisite commission and aid for this purpose, or by establishing Normal Schools for the express purpose, or by having recourse to these three kinds of School, or, in fine, by placing at the disposal of the Superintendent of Schools a certain sum to aid those of our young people who have a disposition for teaching, to qualify themselves by deriving instruction from good tuition-practice in such Educational Establishments as should be recommended for this purpose.

If the Legislature, in its liberality, should think fit to make a grant to aid the Teachers in preparing themselves for teaching, it might be left to the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools to award them a small gratuity for travelling expenses and for board in the City of Montreal or Quebec, so long as they might remain there to receive, from the counsels of experience and the march of information, lessons useful for tuition. The moderate sum of £400 would suffice for a trial of two or three years for this purpose. This sum might be employed in favor of such Teachers and young people as might be recommended to the Superintendent by the School Commissioners, who, to permit the Teachers to avail themselves of this enactment of the Law, might give regularly each year at least one month's vacation, at the same time. There are many among the Teachers, who, on coming to town to take lessons in certain branches of instruction in our upper Schools, could themselves give on other branches of instruction, by means of lectures or otherwise, most useful lessons to those of their colleagues who might be disposed to profit by them. This would be the means of creating among the Teachers a thirst for instruction, and a very desirable spirit of emulation. The most capable might divide amongst themselves certain branches of practical instruction, by means of some sort of association which they might establish among themselves, for the production of compositions or dissertations on these branches, to be read and judged of by a Committee of Examination named for this purpose. It is certain that to place themselves thus in a condition to give lessons to others, many well-informed Teachers would make new efforts to arrive at the highest possible perfection in the usual branches of learning, in the art of tuition, and *certainly*, the lessons of experience in this particular are not to be despised.

A part of the grant made for the instruction of the Teachers might be employed in procuring for them, the works of some of the authors who have written on instruction, and especially on mutual instruction.

This manner of preparing Teachers, and of perfecting those who are already initiated in teaching, would perhaps be preferable to the Normal Schools, and that for many reasons: 1^o. Because it would be less expensive: 2^o. Because it would offer means of instruction to a greater number of individuals: 3^o. Because it would create and keep up more emulation in primary instruction: 4^o. Because it would ward off the inconveniences which might result from

the religious instruction of the scholars in the Normal Schools. For, by this manner of self-instruction, each would be at liberty to attend the Educational Establishment or Establishments of his religious creed.

The offer, however, of contributing thus to the instruction of the Teachers might still be made even if Normal Schools were established for the same object; but in case the Legislature might think fit to establish them, it is my humble opinion, that, for the satisfaction of the scholars, as well as of their parents and the public, the Normal Schools should each be divided into two distinct and separate branches, one exclusively for Protestants and the other for Roman Catholics.

3^o A Deaf and Dumb School has already existed in the country, and has been discontinued for want of means, for pupils were never wanting. It obtained, however, a success which, were there no other considerations, would of itself, be a powerful motive to continue its operation, even if the number of that class of subjects, for whom it was intended, were not sufficient to induce the Legislature, in its benevolence, to provide effective means for giving instruction to this interesting portion of our fellow subjects. One School of this kind might in this respect satisfy the wants of the deaf and dumb of all parts of the Province, and it would be easy to procure among us Teachers who have gone through their probation in this mode of teaching, both in English and French, in a very honorable and satisfactory manner.

I have frequently visited with a lively interest, when I was Member of Parliament, the School of these skilful Teachers at Quebec, and examined their pupils in divers branches of practical instruction and on the principles of Christian morality, and I have always been exceedingly well satisfied with the ingenious mode of instruction of these Masters and of the progress of their scholars. These facts are so many motives, supplying what perhaps was wanting in the others, to induce the Legislature to re-establish, on a footing for the benefit of the deaf and dumb of the whole Province, a School which the Legislature of the former Province of Lower Canada had so well commenced, and I believe it my duty to draw its attention to this subject.

4^o Nothing can be more advantageous to the progress of children than uniformity of teaching in Schools, and nothing can more effectively further this instruction, than uniformity in the books in use in the Schools; nor is there anything more desirable than uniformity in the School books. Nothing, however, is more common than to see books of all kinds on the same subject in our Schools, and it cannot be disguised that this circumstance produces much delay in Schools, and great expense for the parents, not only because these latter are thus obliged to procure more frequently for their children, books which are soon thrown aside to make room for others on the same subject, but also because the children, retarded in their studies by these frequent changes of books, are under the necessity of attending School for a much longer time to acquire the same amount of information.

From these considerations, it is easy to comprehend that a slight contribution made by the inhabitants of the locality to place the School Commissioners in a condition to procure uniform books for the children of all Schools under their control, would be a means both more regular and more economical. It would also be an easy means of procuring, by slow degrees, for the children of the poor as well as of the rich, the books which they require: this would be a very great advantage, for it may be said, that children are often in want of books in Schools, either because the parents neglect to procure them, or because they have not the means of so doing.

The Educational Law passed in 1841, contained an admirable enactment in this particular: it authorised the local authorities to levy each year on the inhabitants the sum of £10 for the purchase of books. It would be desirable that this very enactment should be introduced into the present Education Act. It would be, perhaps, the means of placing the School Commissioners in a condition to commence, with this small fund, Parish Libraries, the want of which is everywhere so sensibly felt. These Libraries would be a means of instruction both economical, commodious, certain, and powerful, under the direction of the School Commissioners, and much more so under the direction of the local Clergy; and, therefore, I have made it my duty on the present occasion, to recommend their establishment.

5^o Agriculture is everywhere considered as the principal source of existence of a civilized people, because Agricultural products supply each day their immediate wants, and serve to keep up the Commerce which brings them, in exchange, articles of necessity, of taste, and of convenience. Our climate and soil, are peculiarly favorable to Agriculture; but Agricultural knowledge is here yet in its infancy. It is, then, of the first importance, in a country like ours, essentially Agricultural, to inculcate its principles in the rising generation, and this might easily be done by means of our Model Schools, our Academies, and our Colleges. With this view, there might be introduced, into these Educational Establishments a small treatise on Horticulture and Agriculture, in the form of a Catechism, for example. The venerable and lamented M. Perrault, in his Treatise on Agriculture, recommends that a farm should be attached, for each County at least, to a Model School, where Agriculture might be theoretically and practically taught to the scholars. After his plan, arranged with much judgment, the students would themselves perform all the farm-work, besides instructing themselves in the

other branches of Elementary Instruction. It is to be regretted that his truly patriotic views have not as yet been carried out.

I have, for a length of time, made it my duty to recommend the Teachers to teach the elementary principles of Agriculture, and to practise Horticulture at least, by means of a garden cultivated under their auspices by their students : but, unfortunately, everything is wanting to them for this so desirable course of instruction ; Land, in the first place, is wanting, and also, a small treatise on this subject, condensed so as to be suited to the comprehension of children.

6^o. The want of a Journal of Education has been for a long time felt in the country. In fact, a Journal of this kind would be of great utility to Public Instruction, by serving as a particular organ through which the Superintendent might communicate with the School Commissioners and the Teachers. The nature of the duties of these two important classes of men devoted to the education of youth, demands it. They would find it an easy means of instructing themselves daily on matters of a general nature, which might be thus addressed to them through the instrumentality of the press. It would be the means of avoiding much correspondence, much trouble, and considerable expense for postage of letters.

The School Law, or an abstract of the School Law, and the explanations which some of its clauses might require, the circulars connected therewith, notices and brief forms, general instructions either to the School Commissioners, or to the Visitors, or to the Teachers, or to those having to contribute to the local School Fund, a list of school books recommended, extracts from the best authors who have written on the different modes of instruction, dissertations on the different branches of practical and moral instruction, proceedings of Associations of Teachers, such proceedings of School Commissioners as might be generally interesting, a list of the Teachers admitted, from time to time to practise teaching, by the Boards of Examiners, the proceedings of these Boards, the account of the Public Examinations of the Schools, the demands for situations by Teachers, and those for Teachers by School Commissioners, observations which enlightened friends of Education might think proper to make on the operation of the School Act, a review or critique of works having reference to Public Instruction, which might be published or imported into the country, the whole either in English or French as the case might be, and without any political or religious consideration :—such are the various subjects which might be introduced into a Journal of Education.

A Journal of this kind might be published once a month, and the number of copies might be sufficient to enable one of them to be sent to the School Commissioners of each Parish or Township, and another for the use of the Teachers of the Schools under their control, without their being subjected to any expense or outlay.

A similar Journal is published in several of the United States, and that of the State of New York might serve as a model of the kind. It is the vehicle of communication between the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is the ostensible Editor, and those who are called to take part in the execution of the School Law, and it is thus a direct and certain means of intercourse, as advantageous as it is easy.

The peculiar interest which a Journal of Education would everywhere excite for the instruction of youth, the more easy means which it would give of procuring for the latter so great a blessing, the great advantages infallibly accruing to those in a condition to make use of it ; in a word, the progress and perfecting of the art of instruction, which it would so powerfully advance, by enabling each to act with regularity, certainty, and uniformity, all these things, I say, are so many strong considerations which may induce the Legislature to make a small grant for this purpose.

IV.

I believe it my duty to lay before the Legislature, Statistical Returns, showing the number of Schools which were in operation in 1844, and during the first six months of 1845, respectively, the number of children who attended them, the amount of monies paid to the Teachers by the parents of the children, and the amount allowed in favour of the Schools out of the public fund, so that the present condition of education in this country may be seen at a glance. These tables, which are subjoined, are but a summary of what has been paid in each of the twenty-four Municipal Districts created in 1840, between which I was required, in accordance with the School Act 4 and 5 Vict., chap. 18, to divide that part of the £50,000 accruing to Lower Canada.

The whole nevertheless humbly submitted.

(Signed,)

J. B. MEILLEUR, S.E.

EDUCATION OFFICE, }
Montreal, 15th April, 1846. }

Summary of School Reports for 1844, and what has been allowed to each Municipal District out of the Public Fund.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS.	Number of Children attending the Schools.	Schools.		Amount paid to the Teachers by the Inhabitants.			Amount allowed to each District out of the Public Fund.		
		Under control of the Commissioners.	Dissentient.						
				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Beauharnois,.....	3856	106	3	2,576	16	1	1,583	8	1½
Berthier,.....	1907	53	2	1,141	16	3	994	17	1
Bonaventure,.....	348	11	...	253	3	1	253	3	1
Chaudière,.....	3156	108	...	1,536	17	2½	1,230	4	4½
Dorchester,.....	3247	115	...	1,539	7	11½	1,093	6	1
Gaspé,.....	480	15	...	339	0	0	339	0	0
Kamouraska,.....	2145	70	...	1,338	6	5½	1,042	1	0½
Leinster,.....	2052	54	1	1,063	6	6	930	7	9
Missisquoi,.....	3621	110	2	2,286	1	9½	972	4	8
Montreal,.....	3028	84	...	2,154	17	8½	1,488	17	8½
Nicolet,.....	3501	111	6	1,761	10	3½	1,386	10	5
Portneuf,.....	1347	39	...	580	0	11½	531	5	3
Quebec,.....	5499	118	1	4,765	3	9	1,990	18	9
Richelieu,.....	3061	90	1	2,034	2	3½	1,728	19	11½
Rimouski,.....	1020	34	...	649	6	10	553	11	0
Saguenay,.....	1006	33	...	691	19	9½	513	16	5½
Sherbrooke,.....	3594	139	...	2,351	1	1	954	17	7
St. Hyacinthe,.....	2550	68	1	1,216	9	3½	911	16	4
St. John's,.....	5364	148	2	3,287	3	1½	2,561	6	4½
St. Thomas,.....	3068	99	...	1,456	15	3	1,241	6	8
Sydenham,.....	762	30	...	672	6	7	411	1	4
Terrebonne,.....	1064	31	...	683	11	5	586	3	2
Three Rivers,.....	2596	62	1	1,237	19	5	927	15	2
Two Mountains,.....	2758	83	...	1,661	1	7½	1,182	11	5
Total,	61030	1811	21	£37,278	4	9	£25,409	9	9½

Summary of School Reports for the 1st part of 1845, and of what has been allowed to each Municipal District out of the Public Fund.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS.	Number of Children attending the Schools.	Schools.		Amount paid to the Teachers by the Inhabitants.			Amount allowed to each District out of the Public Fund.		
		Under control of the Commissioners.	Dissentient.						
				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Beauharnois,.....	3967	111	2	1,470	17	8½	778	1	11
Berthier,.....	1807	52	2	618	8	8½	490	16	6
Bonaventure,.....	377	12	...	172	6	5	164	11	5
Chaudière,.....	2876	96	2	671	1	1	528	15	10½
Dorchester,.....	2515	82	...	591	16	10½	504	17	2
Gaspé,.....	451	15	...	167	9	1½	150	0	0
Kamouraska,.....	2012	60	...	729	1	4	508	15	9½
Leinster,.....	2356	59	2	615	2	6	513	18	10½
Missisquoi,.....	4011	119	...	977	18	7	484	11	1
Montreal,.....	2563	73	...	866	17	4	719	2	8½
Nicolet,.....	3225	106	1	951	17	4	726	8	4½
Portneuf,.....	1477	44	...	382	14	8	309	12	1½
Quebec,.....	5186	115	1	1,925	16	7½	1,052	9	2½
Richelieu,.....	2991	82	1	1,072	3	10	825	11	8½
Rimouski,.....	1269	39	...	346	6	3	282	11	8
Saguenay,.....	1219	37	...	445	2	4½	295	1	5
Sherbrooke,.....	3967	136	...	985	11	9	474	13	4½
St. Hyacinthe,.....	2147	61	2	568	14	7½	436	1	0
St. John's,.....	5468	141	2	1,828	6	1½	1,334	6	7
St. Thomas,.....	3048	93	...	748	19	4	603	9	10½
Sydenham,.....	567	22	...	217	19	8½	122	5	10½
Terrebonne,.....	1152	32	...	383	6	9½	324	11	9½
Three Rivers,.....	2108	54	...	604	11	8	472	0	11
Two Mountains,.....	2630	81	...	809	1	3	611	1	3
Total,	59,589	1722	15	£18,151	12	0½	£12,713	16	6